Letter sorting system in mail trains

†3593. SHRIMATI GURCHARAN KAUR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) when the letter sorting system in the mail trains was introduced and what are the reasons for its discontinuation;

(b) the benefit derived from it inspite of the fact that a mail bogie still remains attached with the mail trains; and

(c) the arrangements to be made by Government to restart the system in public interest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Letter sorting system in sorting Sections in trains was introduced in the year 1863. Sorting sections functioning in trains were converted into transit section (dealing with closed bags) in a phased manner between 1982 to 1985. The main reasons for abolition of sorting sections were shortage of adequate space in running sections to handle increased mail traffic; extremely unhealthy work environment due to dust, inadequate lighting arrangements, high operational cost and lack of motivation in younger staff for deployment in running sections involving everyday travelling.

(b) The benefits derived from the conversion of shorting sections into transit sections were better utilization of space for handling exchange of bags and reduction in the operational cost.

(c) At present, there is no proposal for reintroduction of the system of sorting section.

Ceiiular phones as i.T. instruments

3594. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to declare cellular phones as IT instruments;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Sir, Cellular Phones are already covered under the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) of World Trade Organization to which India is a Signatory. As such, Cellular Phones are IT Instruments.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Cellphone consumers in Karnataka

3595. SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) how many BSNL cellphone prepaid and post paid customers are there in Karnataka and the reasons for stopping release of new connections; and

(b) Whether it is a fact that Sim Cards are in short supply which is expected from other countries for which Government have already issued order?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) BSNL has provided 127357 Prepaid and 72848 Postpaid Cellular connections upto 31.3.2003, in the state of Karnataka and continues to provide the new connections.

(b) No, Sir.

Promotion of international gateways in N.E.R.

3596. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of various international gateways for internet running in the country, in Government as well as non-Government Sectors, State-wise;